

MINUTES
COUNCIL DISTRICT ADVISORY
TASK FORCE

Tuesday, March 4, 2003



Human Resources Pinnacle Room
7575 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, Arizona

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Present:	Jeffrey Abts	Michael Pickett
	Susan Bitter Smith	Robertta Pilcher
	James Derouin	Wendy Riddell
	Suzanne Klapp	Donald Scott
	Barbara Klein	Lida Stewart
	George Knowlton	James Wellington
	William McCluskey	

Also Present:

Deputy City Attorney Donna Bronski
Government Relations Coordinator Peggy Carpenter
Deputy City Clerk Carolyn Jagger
Executive Assistant Jeff Kulaga

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Susan Bitter Smith called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

SPEAKERS

Speaker Karen Osborn, Maricopa County Elections Director, discussed Maricopa's experience with district elections. Assisting Ms. Osborn were Yvonne Reed, Executive Assistant to the County Recorder, and Tim Johnson, GIS Programmer Analyst. Ms. Osborn provided four handouts: two affidavits, a partial list of Maricopa County's election services, and guidelines for redistricting (attached). Points of discussion included:

- There are 1,030 polling places in Maricopa County.
- Ms. Osborn presented the most recent version of the Legislative District Map, which is believed to be final, but is under appeal.
- The process for establishing districts and redistricting are very similar, requiring basically the same process for drawing the district boundary lines, involving the public, and obtaining preclearance from the US Justice Department.
- Each district must contain the same number of people. Districts must be compact, contiguous and cannot split up community groups. Once the lines are drawn ("with blinders on"), then minority percentages must be evaluated.
- Maricopa County has a program on their website (www.recorder.maricopa.gov/maps) that allows the public to draw district boundaries and submit them for consideration.

Council District Advisory Task Force
Tuesday, March 4, 2003
Page 2

- The Voting Rights Act requires preclearance by the Justice Department of every single election publication, process, and procedure, and any changes that are made to existing publications, processes, or procedures. In addition, every publication and announcement must be translated into Spanish.
- One of the issues the Justice Department looks at is minority representation. Communities of interest cannot be split, and percentage criteria for districts must be met.
- In reviewing a city's preclearance submittal, the Justice Department wants to see the details. Whether a municipality is establishing districts or redistricting, it is very important to involve the public in the process. Following the lengthy and involved public participation process, everything that was done must be reported to the Justice Department, including transcripts, maps, and public information pieces.
- It is important to demonstrate to the Justice Department that minorities were involved in the districting process and were "at the table."
- It is more costly for Maricopa County to conduct district elections. Different versions of the ballot, additional information, and reports by district rather than by municipality contribute to the cost. Currently, Maricopa County does not pass this cost on to the city. When drawing district boundaries it is very important not to split a precinct. It leads to voter confusion and increases the cost of the election.
- The County tries to limit precincts to a maximum of 2,000 voters, and spends approximately \$10,000 per precinct.
- Municipalities can contract with Maricopa County for districting and redistricting services, but this should be considered a very remote option. This is a huge undertaking and it is important to do it right. Depending on the scheduled elections, the County may not be able to make these services a top priority. Karen Osborn did offer the County's assistance and support should Scottsdale voters choose to go to a district system.

A representative from the City of Tucson was not available to present information on Tucson's election process. As a result, Peggy Carpenter, City of Scottsdale Government Relations Coordinator, prepared a research paper on Tucson's district election process, which she summarized for the Task Members. Points of discussion included:

- Tucson was incorporated as a city in 1877 and became a charter city in 1883. The present Tucson City Charter was ratified in 1929. Tucson's population at the time of the 2000 census was 486,699.
- Since 1929, Tucson has elected City Council members from six wards, or districts. Each ward currently has over 81,000 citizens.

Council District Advisory Task Force
Tuesday, March 4, 2003
Page 3

- Tucson Council elections are partisan elections. Primary elections allow qualified political parties to nominate candidates to be placed on the general election ballot. “Qualified” political parties in Tucson are the Republican, Democratic and Libertarian parties.
- District Vote in Primary/At Large vote in General – Tucson Council members are nominated by voters of their ward in the primary election, and elected by voters of the city at large in the general election.
- In 1985, Tucson enacted public campaign finance laws and public matching funds, which went into effect with the 1987 elections (similar to Clean Elections).
- In 1993, a Nonpartisan Initiative signed by 14,000 voters recommended
 - Nonpartisan elections and
 - Council members elected by a majority vote in the ward.

This initiative was supported by the Tucson Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, but failed at the ballot.

- In 2003, the Good Government Council Subcommittee is considering changes to the Tucson Charter that were recommended by the Citizens’ Blue Ribbon Charter Advisory Committee. These recommendations may appear on the November 2003 ballot.
 - Changes in the power of the Mayor
 - Nonpartisan elections
 - Expand from 6 to 8 wards
- Currently, each Tucson Council ward has seven employees, with 1.5 employees in the Council General Administration Office dedicated to Council members. These 43.5 employees are separate from the 9.5 employees in the Mayor’s office. The total budget for the six wards, including Council salaries, was approximately \$2,500,000 in the most recent fiscal year.

A Task Force member asked staff to obtain information on voter turnout for Tucson since 1993. Another member asked for salary information for the Tucson Mayor and Council.

MINUTES

Hearing no additions or corrections, the chair called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 25, 2003 meeting of the District Advisory Task Force. George Knowlton so moved, which was seconded by Roberta Pilcher.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF MATERIALS

There was no discussion or questions regarding the handouts.

DISCUSSION OF LOGISTICS OF MARCH 5, 2003 PUBLIC HEARING

The Chair reviewed the agenda for the March 5, 2003 Public Hearing. The Public Hearing is for the purpose of taking public comment and Task Force members will not be presenting their comments during the hearing.

AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING/FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

The Chair reviewed the agenda for the next regular meeting of March 11, 2003. Due to the number of items and speakers, the meeting time for the March 11, 2003 will be extended until 9:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Task Force member Roberta Pilcher moved to adjourn. Task Force member Don Scott seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m. The next meeting of the District Advisory Task Force is 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, March 11, 2003 in the Human Resources Pinnacle Room.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I hereby certify that the foregoing Minutes are a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Council District Advisory Task Force held on the 4th day of March 2003.

I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held, and that a quorum was present.

DATED this 12th day of March 2003.

CAROLYN JAGGER
Deputy City Clerk